1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 - SR9 Carib SR9

538 accounts of their experiences, and are drawn out to considerable lengths. While an individual is telling a story the listeners continually supply exclamations, a high pitched "ko-o?" or an "ao-o" with rising and falling inflection. The pattern is for listeners continually to express surprise, astonishment, and amazement at the words of the speaker. It is also customary to repeat "yao" and to grunt at frequent intervals as a means of encouraging the speaker and showing him that he is holding the listeners' attention. Speakers dramatize their material with gestures and tones of voice. Excitement or laughter grip the group as the story progresses to its climax. Most of these stories are, of course, utterly pointless in translation, but I believe that this type of story-
[536] telling can be regarded as the Carib equivalent of the drama.

RECKONING OF TIME

805 SPECIAL mention should be made of the Carib attitude toward the
824 passage of time. No provision is made for reckoning the passing
821 of the years, or for distinguishing one year from another, so that no one knows his exact age. The term for year is "siditcho," meaning "star," and referring to the seven stars of the Pleiades, which pass over the heavens once a year. Aside from these I have found little evidence of star lore among the Caribs. On the Barama it is said that one knows that the end of the year has come by noticing that certain wild fruits, such as the sawari nut, are ripe and are dropping to the ground. The present month is distinguished from the preceding and following ones by reference to the phases of the moon, but beyond this calculations seldom go.

211 When a man leaves home for a journey, he specifies the number of
805 days he will be gone by giving to his wife a cord in which a knot has been tied for each day of his absence. The wife unties one of the knots each day that he is away, and expects him to return when the cord is finally knotless.[1]

The time of day is reckoned by the position of the sun. Thus, when asked how long will be required to reach a given point, an Indian will reply by pointing to the position which the sun will occupy when the destination has been reached.

[1] For the distribution of this device in South America, and its connection with the quipus of the Andean area, see Nordenskiöld, 1930, *Modifications of Indian Culture*.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

or another may be associated with practically every natural and man-made object in the universe. The average layman is wary lest he trespass upon the rights of the spirits or displease them in other ways, but he is often rather hazy as to their attributes and powers. In regard to higher spiritual affairs the layman is as a rule required to take a negative attitude, for generally speaking, his positive pleas and requests to the most powerful spirits can be conveyed only through the medium of a piaiyen (medicine man or priest) or an aremi emu (magician or sorcerer).

In charge of the whole universe is a sort of literary diety, whose name is not known even to the piaiyen. This supreme being is so remote from the life of men that his characteristics are only indefinitely known and are little discussed. He is the supreme power or creator, the first cause, as it were. The priests do not pretend to be able to talk with this head spirit as they can with certain of the lesser supernatural beings; they have never seen him or had any personal dealings with him. He is called iopotari akuru ("boss spirit") and it is insisted that he "fixed everything," that he got the universe started, and even, it seems, had dealings with human beings in remote times. In one of the myths we have the story of the primeval contest, or race, between the several species of animals, heavenly bodies, and so forth, a competition which was arranged by the iopotari akuru as a method of judging the attributes of various things so that they could be assigned to their rightful places in the scheme of the universe. In another myth it is said that a long time ago, this spirit called the people to come to him in the bush. One man of the group he took with him into the forest and changed this man into the appearance of a typical bush spirit, or epo, that is, a being with a long thin body covered with hair, equipped with projecting brow ridges, and devoid of an anus. The humans were naturally alarmed when the man returned. So when the spirit called them to come again they refused. This vexed the head spirit, and ever since that time certain bush spirits under his direction, called epos, have seized and eaten human beings whenever they have had the opportunity.

The head spirit is also, for instance, responsible for the moon and the stars. The nature of these celestial bodies is unknown to the Indians, but the fact that they are believed to have been included in the primeval competitive race suggests an animistic